

Some Scholars and Religious Leaders Featured in the DVDs

Narrators

Conrad Archuletta, Hakim (traditional Muslim Medicine), Albuquerque, New Mexico

Errol Peterkin, Orlando, Florida

Areej Zufari, Humanities professor, Valencia Community College, Florida

Other Speakers

Sheikh Hamza Yusuf Hanson, Zaytuna College, Berkeley, California

Dr. John Esposito, Georgetown University, Washington, DC

Dr. Abdullah Hakim Quick, Toronto, Canada

Dr. Umar Faruq Abdallah, Chairman of the Board and Scholar-in-Residence, Nawawi Foundation, Burr Ridge, Illinois

Nihad Awad, Executive Director and co-founder of the Council on American-Islamic Relations

Rev. Dr. Shanta Premawardhana, President, Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education, Chicago, Illinois

Rev. Fred Morris, former executive director of the Florida Council of Churches

Rev. Allan Jones, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, California

Lisa Zainab Killinger, chiropractor, Palmer College, Pennsylvania

Imam Jowhari Abdelmalik, Howard University chaplain

Rev. Bryan Fulwider, Congregational Church of Winter Park, Florida (UCC)

Imam Abdurahman Sykes, Muslim Academy of Greater Orlando, Florida

Imam Zaid Shakir, Zaytuna College, Berkeley, California

Ibrahim Abusharif, Qur'an expert, Chicago, Illinois

Marwa Zeini, lawyer

Yusuf and Dilara Saeed, doctor and teacher respectively, Chicago, Illinois

Lori Ismail, former model, Santa Clara, California

Muhammad Musri, president of the Islamic Society of Central Florida

Catherine and Farid Sareini, Detroit, Michigan

Hassan Dan Mekled, youth counselor, Michigan

Muhammad Aleem, Islamicity.com, California

Cotayba Al-Saigh, policeman, Northern Virginia

Shannon Burke, radio host, Orlando, Florida

Noor Zufari, Orlando, Florida

Andrea Muhsina, McLean, Virginia

Prepared by Carol Schersten LaHurd, Ph.D., with the Consultative Panel on Lutheran-Muslim Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Office of the Presiding Bishop, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations; and A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 2012.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in the *Discover Islam* videos are those of the producers and may not necessarily reflect official positions of the Evangelical Lutheran in America or A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



Discover Islam DVD Series Study Guide



An Introduction to the Series

A word from ELCA Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations

In a historic first, an Islamic leader was invited to bring greetings to the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly – a bold witness to our church's commitment to inter-religious relations, and specifically our commitment to Lutheran-Muslim dialogue. Dr. Sayyid Sayeed is the national director for the Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances of the Islamic Society of North America, one of the largest Islamic organizations in the U.S.

As he closed his greetings, Sayeed said to those gathered, "It is a new millennium – your leadership is critical, your understanding is critical not only for this country but for the entire globe. You have a certain set of standards of cooperation, of understanding, those are a great asset for us, and it's with this kind of understanding that we will be moving forward. ... We pray God almighty to bless us together and deliver this mission that is ours." He received a standing ovation from the Assembly.

Not long thereafter, we received a generous invitation to distribute throughout our church complimentary copies of a six-disc DVD series titled *Discover Islam* – produced by Discover Islam – USA, and endorsed by the Islamic Society of North America. What a wonderful gift to all of us! ELCA synod offices, seminaries, and members of our nationwide Lutheran Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Representatives Network received copies of this DVD, and it is also available for purchase online at www.discoverislam.com.

Through the leadership of the ELCA Consultative Panel on Lutheran-Muslim Relations, and in particular the expert knowledge, skilled research, and exceptional authorship of Carol Schersten LaHurd, Ph.D, we have produced this study guide. It is intended to be used as an interpretive tool, unpacking how we, as Christians, might best approach and better understand each of the topics covered by the short DVDs in the series. Importantly, we hope that your use of "Discover Islam" will deepen your self-understanding as a Lutheran, and enhance your relationship to your Muslim neighbors.

We extend our thanks to Carol, to members of the Consultative Panel, and to our partners at Discover Islam – USA. May our endeavors together continue to deepen our relationships in the spirit of mutual understanding and peace.

In peace,

Donald S. McCoid and Kathryn M. Lohre

Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Staff, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Introduction

Imagine that you and your family are moving to a remote Asian village, where you will set up a health clinic under the sponsorship of your denomination. You quickly recognize that the local people with whom you will live and work not only are ignorant about Christianity but hold some negative stereotypes toward it. You begin to create learning resources to explain the Christian religion to them. You recognize that you should feature the diversity of Christian practice around the world. You want even to acknowledge the occasional misuse of the tradition by extremist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and cults such as the Branch Davidians. But mainly you want to help your new community understand your own Christian faith and how it shapes your life and motivates your work.

The producers of the DVD series *Discover Islam* had very similar goals, as expressed in these words from the DVD cover: "There are over a billion and a half people across the globe that claim to be followers of Islam. Yet few people outside the faith truly understand Muslim beliefs, practices and values. There is great misinformation about issues ranging from jihad to women's rights. These DVDs aim to remedy this situation."

This study guide has been developed by the Evangelical Lutheran in America (ELCA) and A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, in part because the series has been distributed to many church offices and institutions and has generated wide interest. **Although church leaders do not endorse these DVDs' content, they believe the series, accompanied by this study resource, merits use by congregations and institutions seeking to better understand Islam and to form positive relationships with their Muslim American neighbors. They believe there is value in learning about Islam from Muslims.**

Church leaders also readily acknowledge that *Discover Islam* is not a resource created mainly by academic experts. Instead, it is a resource that represents some authentic American Muslim voices sharing their vision of Islam and their hopes for constructive Muslim participation in American public life and for friendship and mutual understanding with religious others. We have chosen to honor these voices and to provide guidance for the use of these DVDs in Christian congregations and institutions.

Understandably, the DVDs showcase Muslims who are faithful and ardent practitioners of their tradition. **But to the credit of the producers, the DVDs also expose real-world distortions of Islam and the Qur'an in such radical**

actions as prohibiting women's education or terrorist attacks for political ends. It could well be argued that such extremists are no more representative of authentic Islam than are the KKK and Branch Davidians of Christianity.

It is our hope that through viewing and discussing these DVDs, your church community will learn enough about Islam and Muslims to make the distinctions that Christians routinely make among the varied expressions, both positive and destructive, of the Christian tradition.

How to Use This Guide

1. The six DVDs and accompanying study guides can be used separately, in a series, or together over the course of a longer event, such as a retreat:
 - #1 Islam: Faith and History
 - #2 Islam: an American Faith
 - #3 Women in Islam
 - #4 African Americans and Islam
 - #5 Islam: a Faith Hijacked
 - #6 Christians and Islam
2. The leader should plan to introduce the DVDs by reading or summarizing the **Introduction** above to help create an atmosphere of openness to learning from the experience of watching and discussing the segments.
3. The leader should plan how to incorporate the **Elaboration on Key Topics** material and which discussion questions to use in each segment. This step is important in order to supplement the material presented in the DVDs.
4. Material from each study guide can be duplicated for participants or projected on a screen. In addition, the leader may wish to print some of the supplemental material from the recommended online resources.
5. Especially useful for supplementing this study guide are these resources developed by the ELCA:
 - "Christian-Muslim Talking Points"**
www.elca.org/ecumenical/christianmuslimtalkingpoints
 - "Windows for Understanding: Jewish-Muslim-Lutheran Relations"**
Scroll down at www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Presiding-Bishop/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Inter-Religious-Relations.aspx.